

XXXVI.

HOW SEVEN BRIGANTINES WERE CONSTRUCTED AND HOW THEY DEPARTED FROM AMINOYA.

As soon as they were come to Aminoya, the governor ordered the chains which each one had brought for his Indians to be taken and all the iron shot and all the iron in the camp to be collected together. He ordered a forge set up, nails made, and timber cut for the brigantines. A Portuguese of Ceuta who had been taught to saw with saws while a captive at Fez—and they brought him for that reason—taught others who were aiding him to saw timber; and a man from Genoa whom it was God's will to preserve (for without him they [the Christians] could not have left that land, as there was no other who knew how to build ships), together with four or five other Basque carpenters who hewed the planks and knees [*cernatões*] for him, built the brigantines. Two calkers, one a Genoese, and the other from Sardinia, calked them with tow from a plant like daffodils²⁸⁹ (of which I have previously spoken and which is there called "henequen"). But because there was not enough of it, they calked them with flax of the country and blankets which were unraveled for that purpose. A cooper among them fell sick and was at the point of death and there was no other man who could do that work. It pleased God to give him health; and though he was very weak and could not work, two weeks ere they departed, he made for each brigantine two hogshheads called quarter casks by sailors because four of them make a water cask. The Indians of a province located two days' journey up the river, by name Tagoanate,²⁹⁰ as well as those of Anilco and Guachoya and others roundabout seeing that the brigantines were being built and thinking that since their harvests lay along the water,²⁹¹ it was for the purpose of going to look for them;²⁹² and because the governor asked them for blankets which were needed for use as sails, they came frequently and brought many and an abundance of fish. It surely seems that it was God's will to protect them in so great need, disposing the Indians to bring them; for there would have been no remedy except to go to take them; for, in the town where they were, as soon as winter set in, they became isolated and surrounded by water, so that it was impossible to go more than a league or a league and a half by land; and they could not take their horses to get away from there, and without them there was no place where they could attack them [the Indians] because there were many of them; and opposed on foot, one to the other, on water

or land, they [the Indians] had the advantage, because they were more cunning and agile; and because of the lay of the land which suited their wishes in the manner of their warfare. They also brought some ropes and what was lacking for the cables were made from the bark of mulberry trees. They made stirrups out of wood and made anchors out of the [iron] stirrups. In the month of March, although it had not rained in that land for over a month, the river rose in such manner that it stretched clear to Nilco, nine leagues away; and the Indians said that it spread over another nine leagues of land on the other side. In the town where they [the Christians] were—which was higher land where one could go about better—the water rose to the stirrups. Wood was piled up in heaps, and many branches laid on top, and there they fastened the horses; and in the houses they did likewise. Finding that nothing was sufficient, they climbed up above.* And if they left the house they used canoes or went horseback in places where the land was higher. Thus they lived for two months, during which the river did not fall and during which no work was done. The Indians did not cease to come to the brigantines, for they came and went in canoes. The governor feared lest they attack him during that time, and ordered one of those who came to the town to be seized secretly and kept until the others should be gone. One was seized and the governor ordered him tortured in order to get him to tell whether the Indians were preparing any act of treachery. He stated that the caciques of Anilco, Guachoya, Taguanate, and others—in all about twenty caciques—had planned to attack him [the governor] with a great number of men, and that three days before doing so they were to send a gift of fish in order to conceal their great treason and ill will; and on the very day [of the attack] they were to send some Indians on ahead with another gift. These latter, with those who served [the Christians] and who had conspired with them, were to set fire to the houses, but were first to possess themselves of the lances which were leaning against the doors of the houses. The caciques, with all their men, were to be placed in ambush in the woods near the town, and when they saw the fire lit, they were to hasten and rout the horsemen. The governor ordered the Indians to be chained; and on the day of which he [the tortured Indian] spoke, thirty Indians came with fish. He [the governor] ordered their right hands cut off, and in that condition sent them to the cacique of Guachoya to whom they belonged. He ordered them to tell him

*The Portuguese *aos sorberados*, which Robertson rendered as "above," might be rendered more clearly as "to the upper story." A *soberado* or *sobrado* in modern Portuguese is a house of more than one story.

that he and the others could come whenever they wished, for he desired nothing better; but that he should know that they could think of nothing which he did not know before they thought of it. Thereupon, they were all greatly terrified. The caciques of Anilco and Taguanate came to excuse themselves; and a few days later the cacique of Guachoya came, accompanied by one of his principal Indians and vassals. He said that by trustworthy information which he had, the caciques of Anilco and Taguanete had made an agreement to come to make war on the Christians. As soon as Indians came from Anilco, the governor questioned them and they confessed that this was true. He immediately handed them over to the principal man of Guachoya who led them outside the town and killed them. On the morrow others came from Taguanete and they also confessed. The governor ordered their right hands and nostrils cut off and sent them to the cacique. Thereupon, those of Guachoya were very happy and came frequently bearing gifts of blankets, fish, and hogs which had been bred from some sows which had got lost there the year before. As soon as the waters fell, they agreed with the governor that he should send men to Taguanate. They came with canoes in which men of foot went down the river and a captain with men of horse and the Indians of Guachoya who guided him went overland until reaching Taguanete.²⁹³ They assaulted the town, capturing Indian men and women and blankets, which with those they had, were sufficient for their needs. The building of the brigantines²⁹⁴ having been completed in the month of June, although the Indians had declared that the river rose only once during the year, namely, when the snows melted—at the time I have already mentioned it as having risen—it now being summer and a long time having passed since it had rained, it was God's will that the water rising came up to the town until it reached the brigantines, whence they were taken by water to the river; for had they been taken over by land, there would have been danger of their breaking and their bottoms opening up and being altogether disjointed, because for lack of iron the spikes were short and the planks and timbers thin. During their stay there, the Indians of Aminoya, forced by necessity, came to serve them, so that they might give them some of the ears of maize they had taken from them. And since the land was fertile and they were accustomed to eat maize, and they [the Christians] had taken from them [the Indians] all they had, and the people were many in number, they could not sustain themselves. Those who came to the town were so weak and enfeebled that they had no flesh on their bones; and many near the town died of pure hunger and weakness. The governor ordered, under grievous penalties, that no maize should be given them. However, seeing that they had no

lack of hogs and that they were submitting themselves to serve them; and seeing their wretchedness and pitiful condition; having shared with them their maize out of pity for them; when they came to the time of embarking, there was not as much as was necessary. What there was they loaded into the brigantines and into large canoes²⁹⁵ fastened together in pairs. They put twenty-two²⁹⁶ horses aboard—the best ones in camp—and the rest were made into salt meat; and they did the same with the hogs they had. They left Aminoya on the second day of July, 1543.

XXXVII.

HOW THE INDIANS OF QUIGALTAM ATTACKED THE CHRISTIANS ON THE RIVER WHILE GOING ON THEIR VOYAGE AND OF WHAT HAPPENED.

One day before they left Aminoya, they made up their minds to dismiss the Indians of service whom they had—both men and women—with the exception of some hundred or so whom the governor embarked or let those whom he wished embark. And because there were many persons of quality to whom he could not refuse what he granted to others, he made use of a trick, saying that while they were on the river they [the Indians] might serve them, but that as soon as they reached the sea, they would have to abandon them because of the need of water, there being but few casks. To his friends he said in secret that they should take them [their Indians], that they could take them to New Spain; and all those for whom he did not have good countenance—who were in the majority—ignorant of what was concealed from them (which time later made known), thought it inhuman for so short a time of service, in payment of the great service they had performed, to take them away in order to abandon them outside their lands to become captives of others. They abandoned five hundred head of Indians, male and female, among whom were many boys and girls who spoke and understood Spanish. Most of them were overcome with weeping, which was a great pity seeing that they had all readily become Christians and were now lost. Three hundred and twenty-two Spaniards left Aminoya in seven brigantines, of good construction except that the planks were thin because of the shortness of the spikes and they were not pitched. They had no decks by which to keep the water from coming in. In place of decks, they laid planks so that the sailors

could go above to fasten the sails and the men might be sheltered below and above. The governor appointed captains of them and gave each one his brigantine, taking from each one his oath and word that he would be obedient to him until reaching the land of the Christians. The governor took one of the brigantines for himself—the one he considered best. The day they left Ami-noya, they passed Guachoya where the Indians were awaiting them in canoes on the river. They [the Indians] had built a large arbor on land and besought them to disembark. But he [the governor] excused himself and passed by at a distance. The Indians accompanied him in their canoes. Coming to where an arm of the river led off to the right,²⁹⁷ they said the province of Quigualtam lay nearby. They importuned the governor to go to make war on them, and said that they would aid him. But since they had said that it [Quigaltam]²⁹⁸ lay three days' journey below, it seemed to the governor that they had planned some treachery against him. There he took his leave of them and proceeded on his voyage where the force of the water was greater. The current was very powerful and, aided by their oars, they journeyed at a good rate. The first day they landed in a wood on the left side of the river and at night they collected in the brigantines. Next day they came to a town where they landed, but the people there did not dare await them. An Indian woman whom they captured there, on being questioned, said that that town belonged to a cacique called Huhasene, a vassal of Quigaltam, and that Quigaltam was awaiting them with many men. Men of horse went down the river and found some houses in which was considerable maize. They immediately went there and stopped for a day, during which they threshed out and gathered what maize they needed. While they were there many Indians came down the river in canoes and placed themselves somewhat carelessly in form of battle in front on the other side. The governor sent in two canoes what crossbowmen he had and what men could get into them. They [the Indians] took to flight, but seeing that the Spaniards could not overtake them, gaining courage they turned back and coming nearer and shouting menaced them. As soon as they left there, they [the Indians] followed after them, some in canoes and others on land along the river. Going ahead of them, when they reached a town near the bluff,²⁹⁹ they all united, as if to show that they were a mind to wait there. Each brigantine had a canoe fastened astern for its use. Men immediately entered them all and put the Indians to flight. He [the governor] burned the town. Then on that day they landed at a large open field where the Indians did not dare await them. Next day, they [the Indians] got together one hundred canoes, some of which held sixty or seventy Indians, and those of the principal men with their awnings, and they [the princi-

pal Indians] with white and colored plumes of feathers as a device. They came within two crossbow flights of the brigantines, and sent three Indians in one small canoe with a false message so that they might see the nature of the brigantines and the weapons they had. On coming up to the governor's brigantine, one of the Indians went in and told the governor that the cacique of Quigaltam, his lord, sent him to implore his protection, and to inform him that whatever the Indians of Guachoya had told him was false, namely, that they had revolted because they were his enemies; that he was his servitor and considered himself as such. The governor answered him saying that he believed all he said to be true and that he appreciated his friendship highly. Thereupon, they went to the place where the others were awaiting them in their canoes; and from that place, they [the Indians] all came down and came upon the Spaniards yelling and threatening them. The governor sent Juan de Guzmán, who had been captain of foot in Florida, in the canoes with twenty-five³⁰⁰ armed men to get them [the Indians] out of the way. As soon as the Indians saw them coming, they divided into two bands and remained still until the Spaniards reached them, when putting out from each side, they came together, taking between them Juan de Guzmán and those who came ahead with him, and closed with them with great fury. Since their canoes were larger and since many of them jumped into the water in order to keep them upright, and others to seize the canoes of the Spaniards and cause them to overturn, they immediately overturned them. The Christians fell into the water and because of the weight of their armor sank to the bottom. And if any, by swimming or laying hold of a canoe, were able to keep afloat, they [the Indians] struck them over the head with their paddles and the clubs they were carrying and made them sink. When the men in the brigantines beheld their defeat, although they desired to aid them, they were unable to turn back because of the current of the river. Four Spaniards escaped to that brigantine which was nearest the canoes; and these only of all who had gone to the Indians escaped. Eleven men were killed there, among them being Juan de Guzmán and a son of Don Carlos called Juan de Vargas. Most, also, were persons of honor and men of much bearing. Those who escaped by swimming said they saw the Indians enter one of their canoes by the stern with Juan de Guzmán, but whether they bore him away dead or alive, they could not determine.³⁰¹

XXXVIII.

WHICH RELATES HOW THEY WERE PURSUED BY THE INDIANS.

The Indians, on seeing that they had gained the victory, were so greatly encouraged that they went out to engage the brigantines which they had not dared to do before. First they went to that in which Calderón was captain. It was going in the rear guard. At the first flight of arrows twenty-five men were wounded. In the brigantine were only four men with armor. These were stationed at the side in order to defend it. Those who had no armor, seeing that they were being wounded, abandoned the oars and hid away below the covering. The brigantine began to run crosswise and to go whither the current of the water might bear it. On seeing this one of the men in armor, without awaiting the captain's approval for his action, forced a foot soldier to take the oar and steer the brigantine, placing himself before him and covering him with his shield. The Indians did not come up nearer than an arrow's flight, where they took the offensive without being attacked and without receiving any injury, for there was not above one crossbow in each brigantine, and those that there were, were now in very bad condition; so that the Christians did nothing else except to stand as a mark waiting for their arrows. Having left that brigantine they [the Indians] went to another and fought against it for half an hour. And in this way they circulated from one to another of them all. The Christians had brought mats to put under themselves which were doubled and very close and strong so that the arrows did not pierce them. As soon as the Indians gave them time, the brigantines were hung with them. The Indians seeing that they could not shoot direct, shot their arrows haphazardly into the air which fell down into the brigantines and wounded some of the men. Not satisfied with this, they tried to get at those who were coming in the canoes with the horses. Those of the brigantines came about in order to protect them and convoyed them in their midst. And now, finding themselves so closely pursued by them and so tired out that they could not endure it, they resolved to travel all that night following, thinking that they would pass by the land of Quigualtam and that they [the Indians] would leave them. But when they were going along more freely,* thinking that they [the Indians] had already left them, they heard

*The Portuguese that Robertson rendered as "more freely" is *mais descuydados*. Rendered more literally it should be "more unpreoccupied" or "more unworried."

very loud cries hard by, which stunned them. In this manner, they followed us that night and the next day, until noon, when we had now reached the land of others whom they advised to treat us in the same way; and so they did. Those of Quigualtam returned to their own lands, and the others in fifty canoes continued to fight us for a whole day and night. They boarded one of the brigantines which was coming as a rear guard by means of the canoe which it bore astern, and they took away an Indian woman whom they found in it. And from there they wounded some of those in the brigantine. Those who came in the canoes with horses, wearied out with paddling night and day, sometimes allowed themselves to rest.³⁰² Then the Indians were on them at once, and the men in the brigantines would wait for them. The governor made up his mind to land and kill the horses, because of the slowness with which they sailed on account of them. As soon as they saw a place suitable for this, they went thither and killed the horses there, and loaded the meat into the brigantines after salting it. They left four or five of the horses alive on the shore and the Indians went up to them after the Spaniards had embarked. The horses were unused to them and began to neigh and to run about in various directions, whereat the Indians jumped into the water for fear of them. Entering their canoes behind the brigantines, they continued to shoot at them without any pity and followed us that afternoon and the night following until ten o'clock next morning, and then went back up stream. Soon seven canoes came out from a small town located near the river and followed them for a short distance down the river shooting at them. But seeing that because of their small number they were doing them [the Christians] little injury, they went back to their town. After that they had no trouble, until they came almost to the sea.³⁰³ They went for seventeen³⁰⁴ days along the river, a distance of about two hundred and fifty leagues or so.³⁰⁵ Near the sea, it [the river] divided into two branches each of which was about a league and a half wide.

XXXIX.

HOW THEY REACHED THE SEA; AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM BEFORE AND AFTER THEY STARTED THEIR VOYAGE.

A half league before they came to the sea, they anchored there for a day to rest, for they were very tired from rowing and greatly disheartened because

of the many days during which they had eaten nothing but parched and boiled maize, which was doled out in a ration of a leveled-off helmet to each mess of three. While they were there, seven canoes of Indians came to attack those in the canoes they [the Christians] brought. The governor ordered armed men to enter [the canoes] and go out against them [the Indians] and put them to flight. They [the Indians] also came to attack them by land through a thicket and a swamp. They had clubs set with very sharp fish bones, and with these they fought courageously with those of us who sallied out to oppose them. The others who came in their canoes were awaiting with their arrows those who went out to them; and as soon as we came up, both those on land and those in canoes wounded some of us. When they saw that they [the Christians] were approaching, they would turn about face, and like swift horses before foot soldiers, would make off, and after turning hither and thither, and again gathering together without ever getting farther away than an arrow's flight, for thus gathering they would come on shooting without receiving any injury from the Christians. For, although they [the Christians] had some bows, they did not know how to shoot with them and came on rowing, breaking their arms to come up [to the Indians]. The Indians kept circling tirelessly around them in their canoes, waiting and turning about as if in a skirmish. Those [Christians] who went after them [the Indians] seeing that they could do them no harm; and that the closer they [the Christians] obstinately tried to approach them [the Indians], the more injury they received; as soon as they managed to drive them off, they returned to the brigantines. They stayed there two days. From thence they went to the place where that branch of the river flowed into the sea.³⁰⁶ They took soundings in the river near the sea and found a depth of forty fathoms. They stopped there and the governor ordered all and every one of them to state his opinion regarding their voyage—whether, committing themselves to the sea, they should cross direct to New Spain, or whether they should go coasting along. There were various opinions about this. In this matter, Juan de Añasco, who had great self-conceit and set high value on his understanding of navigation and sea matters, but who really had small experience in its practice, influenced the governor. His opinion accorded with that of some others who said that it was much better to take to the open sea and cross the gulf—a voyage one-fourth as long—for if they coasted along, they would make many windings, because of the bends in the land: Juan de Añasco saying that he had seen the sailing chart and that where they were, the coast ran east and west to the river Las Palmas,³⁰⁷ and from the river Las Palmas to New Spain, it ran north and south, and for that reason, if they went continuously within

sight of land, they would make a great circuit and their course would be very slow. They would also run great danger of winter overtaking them ere they could reach a Christian land. They could arrive within ten or twelve days by crossing if they had good weather. The majority opposed this opinion and said it would be safer to coast along even if it did take longer, for their ships had little strength, had no decks, and a slight storm would be enough to wreck them, and if calm or contrary weather should come upon them because of the small space they had for water, they would also run great risk. Even were the ships such that they could venture in them, since they had no pilot or sailing chart by which to steer, to cross over was not a good counsel. This opinion of the majority was confirmed, and they agreed to coast along. When they were about to depart, the cable by which the anchor of the governor's brigantine was cast, broke, and the anchor was lost in the river; and although they were near land, so great was the depth of water that however much swimmers looked for it, it could not be found. This was the cause of great distress to the governor and to all in his brigantine. With a stone for grinding maize which they had brought along, and the bridles still remaining to some of those hidalgos and gentlemen who had horses, they made a weight which passed by way of remedy for an anchor. On July 18, they put out to sea and undertook their voyage amid calm and fair weather. The governor, accompanied by Juan de Añasco, put out to sea in their brigantines, and all followed them.³⁰⁸ On seeing that they had got two or three leagues offshore, the captains of the other brigantines overtook them and asked the governor why he was holding offshore, [and said] that if he intended to leave the coast, he ought to say so, but that he should not do so without getting the opinion of all, and that if he tried to act in any other manner, they would not follow him, but each one would do what seemed best to him. The governor answered saying that he would do nothing without their advice, but that he desired to leave the land in order to be able to sail better and safer by night, and that next day when it was time he would return within sight of land. They sailed that day with a fine wind, the night following and the next day until vespers always in fresh water, at which they were greatly surprised, for they were very far offshore. But so great is the force of the current of the river, and the coast there so shallow and gentle that fresh water runs out very far into the sea.³⁰⁹ That night, they saw some keys³¹⁰ on the right, whither they went. They rested there that night. There Juan de Añasco, by means of his arguments, finished by getting all to consent and consider it proper to take to the open sea, saying, as he had said already, that it would be a great advantage and would shorten their voyage greatly. They sailed for two days

and when they tried to return within sight of land, they could not, because the wind was blowing offshore. On the fourth day, seeing that the water was giving out, and fearing want and danger, they all cursed Juan de Añasco and the governor who had taken his advice. Each one of the captains declared that he would never again get away from the land, although the governor could go wherever he wished. It was God's will that the wind should shift, although only a bit, and four days after having taken to the open sea, and now in need of water, they came within sight of land by dint of rowing and, after great labor, reached it along an unsheltered beach. That afternoon, the wind veered to the south, which is a cross wind along that coast and drove the brigantines ashore, for it was a very stiff wind; and the anchors straightened out because they had little iron and went dragging. The governor ordered them all into the water, and by placing themselves on the land side and by forcing the brigantines seaward when the wave passed by, they kept them up until the wind softened.

XL.

HOW SOME [OF THE BRIGANTINES] GOT LOST FROM OTHERS BECAUSE OF THE STORM AND AFTERWARD CAME TOGETHER ON A KEY.³¹¹

After the storm had ceased, they landed on the beach where they were and by means of some hoes they had brought along they dug some holes which filled with fresh water with which they filled their water casks. Next day they left that place and sailed for two days; and entered a small creek like an estuary sheltered from a south wind which was then blowing and which was contrary to them. Four days passed before they could leave there; and as soon as the sea became quiet, they went out by rowing. They went along that day and about eventide the wind strengthened so that it drove them ashore and they regretted having left there, for as soon as night fell the storm began to rage on sea and the wind to strengthen more and more because of the storm. The brigantines got lost one from the other. The two farthest out to sea went two leagues beyond the place where the others were that night and entered an arm of the sea which ran up into the land. The five which were behind separated one from the other by a distance of a league or a half league found themselves without knowing anything of one another on a very

unsheltered beach where the wind and wave drove them ashore, for the anchors straightened out and went dragging and the oars could not keep them [the brigantines] upright, although seven or eight men laid hold of one oar and rowed seaward. All the other men leaped into the water and as the wave which was driving the brigantine ashore passed by, they pushed it seaward with as much force as possible. Before another wave came, other men bailed out with bowls the water they had shipped. While suffering this hazard of fortune,³¹² in great fear of being lost there, from midnight on they had to endure an insufferable torment from myriads of mosquitoes which came upon them and which caused an irritation whenever they stung as if they were poisonous. In the morning the sea calmed and the wind softened, but not the mosquitoes; and although the sails were white, in the morning, they appeared black with them. The men who were at the oars, could not row unless other men drove them [the mosquitoes] away. The terror and danger of the storm having subsided, upon beholding the disfigurement of their faces and slaps which they had given one another to drive them [the mosquitoes] away, they laughed. They [the brigantines] came together in the estuary where were the two brigantines which had gone on ahead. There a scum was found called "copee"³¹³ which the sea cast up and which resembles pitch (with which they pitch their ships in certain regions where pitch is lacking). There they pitched their brigantines. They stayed [there] two days and then resumed their voyage. They sailed another two days and anchored at a bay or arm of the sea where they stayed two days. The day they left, six men went up the bay in a canoe but did not come to its head. They left there with a south wind which was against them, but since it was light and their desire to shorten their voyage great, they went out by rowing into the sea, and journeyed for two days in that way and with great toil, a very little distance, and entered behind an islet³¹⁴ by means of a branch of the sea which surrounded it [the islet]. While they were there, such weather ensued that they gave fervent thanks to God that they had reached such a shelter. There was an abundance of fish there which they caught with nets and a hook. A man threw out a hook with a line, tying the end of it about his arm. A fish seized it and drew him into the water until he was up to his neck. It was God's will that he remembered his knife which he drew out and cut the line therewith. They stayed there fourteen days, at the end of which God was pleased to send them good weather. Because of that, they very devoutly arranged a procession and walked along the beach praying God to take them to a land where they might serve Him better.³¹⁵

XL [I.E., XLI].

HOW THEY CAME TO THE RIVER OF PANICO.

All along the seacoast wherever they dug, they found water. There they filled their casks and after the procession was ended, they embarked, and always keeping within sight of land, sailed for six days. Juan de Añasco said that they would do well to put out to sea, for he had seen the sailing chart and remembered that the coast ran north and south from the river of Palmas³¹⁶ on, and that so far it had run east and west. According to his opinion, judging by his reckonings, the river of Palmas ought not to be far from where they were. That night they put out to sea and in the morning, over the rim of the water, beheld palm trees and the coast running north and south; and from noon on great mountains which they had not seen thitherto; for from that point to the port of Espiritu Santo where they had entered Florida, it was a very level and low land, and for that reason it could not be seen except when they were very close to it. From what they saw, they believed that that night they had passed the river of Palmas, which is sixty leagues from that of Panico,³¹⁷ which is in New Spain. All gathered together. Some said that they would do well not to sail by night in order not to pass the river of Panico; and others, that it was not advisable to lose time during favoring weather, and that it could not be so near that they would pass it that night. They agreed to set the sails half reefed and sail in that way. Two brigantines which sailed that night with all sails set passed the river of Panico at dawn without seeing it. The first to arrive of the five which were behind was that of which Calderón was captain. For a quarter of a league before they reached it, and before they saw it, they saw the water was muddy and perceived that it was fresh. Coming opposite the river, they saw that water was breaking over a shoal where it flowed into the sea. Because there was no one there who knew it, they were in doubt as to whether they should enter or pass by at a distance. They made up their minds to enter, and they put in to land before reaching the current, and entered the port. As soon as they were inside, they saw Indians, both men and women, on the shore, clad according to the Spanish custom, whom they asked in what land they were. They replied in the Spanish language that that was the river of Panico and that the town of the Christians was fifteen leagues inland. The joy received by all at this news could not be wholly told. For it seemed to them that then they had received birth. Many leaped ashore and kissed the ground and kneeling down with hands and eyes raised to heaven, one and all ceased not to give

thanks to God. As soon as those who were coming behind saw Calderón with his brigantine anchored in the river, they immediately set out thither and entered the port. The two other brigantines which had passed beyond, put out to sea in order to turn back to look for the others, but they could not because the wind was against them and the sea was choppy. Fearing lest they be lost, they ran toward the land and anchored. While there, a storm came up, and seeing that they could not hold themselves there, nor less in the sea, they determined to run up on the land. And as the brigantines were small, they drew but little water, and as there was a sandy beach there, the force of their sails drove them to dry land without harm coming to the men in them. At that time, if those in the port were very joyful, these [on the beach] felt a double sadness in their hearts, for they knew nothing of the others, nor in what land they were, and feared lest it be one of hostile Indians. They came out two leagues below the port, and as soon as they found themselves free of the sea, each one took as much of his clothing as he could carry on his back. They went inland and found Indians who told them where they were, whereat their sorrow was turned into joy.* They gave many thanks to God for having delivered them from so many dangers.

XLII.

HOW THEY REACHED PANICO AND HOW THEY WERE RECEIVED BY THE INHABITANTS.

From the time they went out from the great river of Florida into the sea until they reached the river of Panico, they took fifty-two days. They entered Panico on the tenth of September of the year 1543. They went upstream with their brigantines for four days; and as the wind was light and frequently useless to them because of the many windings of the river; and in towing them up because of the powerful current in many places they could for this reason make but little headway, and with heavy toil;† and seeing that the

*In the Portuguese, the clause that Robertson translated as "where they were" is followed by the words *i os agasalharã*, which means "and welcomed them." Robertson has deleted this phrase in his translation.

†The Portuguese that Robertson translated as "and in towing them up" is *leuãdo os a strga*. There is no such word in Portuguese as "strga." It obviously has been misspelled or lost one or more of its vowels. It could be a misspelling for *atrasar* (to hold back or delay) or for *atrair* (to pull back or attract). There is no word meaning "towing" that remotely resembles "strga."

accomplishment of their desire—namely, to see themselves among Christians and to see the divine offices celebrated which they had not seen for so long—was delayed: they left the brigantines to the sailors and went overland to Panico. All were clad in deerskins, tanned and dyed black—namely cassocks, breeches, and shoes.[‡] Upon entering Panico, they went immediately to the church to pray and give thanks to God for having so miraculously saved them. The inhabitants, whom the Indians had already advised and who knew of their coming, took them to their homes and entertained them—some among them whom they knew and with whom they had had contact, or because they had come from their districts. The *alcalde mayor* took the governor to his home, and all the others, as soon as they arrived, he sent to lodgings in groups of six and ten, according to the capacity of each of the inhabitants; and all were supplied by their hosts with many hens, maize bread, and fruits of the land, which are identical with those of Cuba, of which I have spoken above. The town of Panico³¹⁸ has about seventy householders. Most of them have houses of cut stone; some are of wood [*rama*], and all are thatched with hay.^{*} The land is poor and there is no gold or silver in it. People there are very well supplied with food and service. The richest do not have an income of five hundred cruzados at the outside, which they get in cotton clothing, fowls, and maize, paid to them as tribute by the Indians, their vassals. Of those who left Florida, three hundred and eleven Christians entered that port. The *alcalde mayor* immediately sent one of the citizens by post to inform the viceroy, Don Antonio de Mendoza³¹⁹ (who was living in Mexico) that of the men who had gone with Hernando de Soto to conquer and explore Florida, there had ported there three hundred men,³²⁰ for whom he had determined to provide since they came in the service of his Majesty. At this, the viceroy and all those of Mexico were surprised, for they considered them lost because they had plunged into the land of Florida, and they had had no news of them for a long time. It seemed to them a marvel that they could sustain themselves for so long a time among heathen being without a fortress where they might build strongholds and without any other relief. The viceroy immediately issued an order in which

[‡]The Portuguese *sayos*, which Robertson rendered as "cassocks," would be better rendered as "military greatcoat." *Saio*, the modern form of *sayo*, is not used for "cassock" except in the feminine form of *saia*, meaning "skirt." When it is so used, it is used in a derogatory sense intended as an insult to the cleric or clerics to whom it is addressed.

^{*}Robertson's translation of the Portuguese *algumas de rama*, as "some are of wood" could be misleading. *Rama* is branches or foliage. The structures made of *rama* are something more primitive than a wooden house, more of an arbor-type structure or one with wattle walls.

he decreed that, wherever they should be ordered, the necessary food and Indian porters should be given them; and wherever any refused to make provision, they could take by force what they needed without incurring any penalty. That order was so well obeyed that on the way before they reached the towns the people went out to meet them with fowls and food.

XLIII.

OF THE FAVOR THEY FOUND WITH THE VICEROY AND INHABITANTS OF MEXICO.

From Panico to the great city of Mestitam³²¹ Mexico is a distance of sixty leagues. There are another sixty leagues, both from Panico and from Mexico to the port of Vera Cruz³²² where one embarks for Spain and where those on their way to New Spain land. Those three towns, which were settled by Spaniards, form a triangle, to wit, with Vera Cruz at the south, Panico at the east,³²³ and Mexico at the west, with a distance of sixty leagues one from the other. The land is so thickly populated with Indians that from town to town those which are farthest apart are separated only by a league or half a league. Some of those who came from Florida remained in Panico for a month resting and others for a fortnight—each as long as he wished, for no one showed a long face toward his guests, but gave them everything they had, and showed they were sorry when they bade them goodbye. This can be believed, for the food which the Indians gave as tribute was more than enough for them, and there was nothing to buy or sell in that town. Few Spaniards were there and rejoiced to talk with them. The alcalde mayor divided among all who wished to go to get it all the clothing there belonging to the emperor (which is paid there [by the Indians] as taxes). Those who still had coats of mail rejoiced, for each one found a horse there [in exchange] for it. Some got mounts, and those who could not (the majority of them) set out on their journey afoot. On their way they were well received by the Indians who abode in their towns, and better served than they could have been in their own homes, even though they lived decently as to food.³²⁴ For, if they asked an Indian for a hen, he would bring four; and if they asked for some fruit, they would go off running for it, even if it were a league away. And if any Christian were ill, they would carry him from one town to the next in a chair. To whatever town they came, the cacique, through the agency of an

Indian who carried a rod of justice in his hand (whom they call "tapile,"³²⁵ signifying magistrate [*Merinho*]),* ordered them to be supplied with provisions and Indians as bearers of any clothing they had and for carrying those who were ill, as many as were needed. The viceroy sent a Portuguese to a distance of twenty leagues from Mexico with a quantity of sugar, raisins, pomegranates, and other things given to sick people, for those who might have need of them. He had determined to clothe them all at the emperor's cost. And the inhabitants of Mexico, having heard that they were coming, went out to meet them; and with great courtesy requesting it as a favor, each one took to his home those whom he could and gave them clothing—each the best he could—so that he who was least well clad had clothing worth thirty cruzados and upward. To all who cared to go to the lodging of the viceroy, the latter ordered clothing to be given, and those who were persons of quality ate at his table. For men of lesser sort, he had a table in his house for all who cared to eat at it. He was immediately informed who each one was, in order to show him the honor he merited. Some of the conquistadors placed them all, both gentlemen and peasants, at the same table with themselves and frequently made the servant sit shoulder to shoulder beside his master. This was mainly done by artisans and men of low sort. However, those of better breeding, asked who each one was and differentiated among persons. But all did what they could with great goodwill, each telling those he had in his house not to be vexed or hesitate to take what was given them, for they had formerly beheld themselves in like circumstances and others had helped them and that such was the custom in that land. May God reward them; and those whom He was pleased to let escape from Florida and come to the land of Christians, may it please Him that this be for His service; and to those who died there and all those who believe in Him and confess His holy faith, may He grant them through His mercy the glory of paradise. Amen.

*Robertson's "(whom they call 'tapile,' signifying magistrate)" is not enclosed in parentheses in the Portuguese text.

XLIII.

WHICH DECLARES CERTAIN DIVERSITIES AND PECULIARITIES OF THE LAND OF FLORIDA; AND THE PRODUCTS AND BIRDS AND ANIMALS OF THAT LAND.

From the port of Espiritu Santo, where they landed when they entered Florida, to the province of Ocute, a distance of about four hundred leagues or so, the land is very level and has many lakes and thick woods. In places there are wild pine groves and the soil is lean, and without a mountain or hill in it.* The land of Ocute is the most fertile and vigorous and has the most open forest and very excellent fields along the rivers.† From Ocute to Cutifachiqui is a distance of about one hundred and thirty leagues, eighty of which are without inhabitants and covered with many wild pine groves. Large rivers flow through the uninhabited part. From Cutifachiqui to Xuala is a distance of about two hundred and fifty leagues, all the land being mountainous. Cutifachiqui and Xuala are located on level ground, high, and with excellent river meadows.³²⁶ Thence, as far as Chiaha, Coça, and Talise, the land is level, dry and fertile, and greatly abounding in maize. From Xuala to Tascaluça is a distance of about two hundred and fifty leagues. From Tascaluça to the great river it is about three hundred leagues, the land being low and having many swamps.³²⁷ From the great river onward, the land is higher and open and the most densely populated of all the land of Florida. And along this river, from Aquixo to Pacaha and Coligoa, a distance of one hundred and fifty leagues, the land is level and covered with open forest, and in places has very fertile and pleasant fields. From Coligoa to Autiamque is a distance of about two hundred and fifty leagues of mountainous country. From Autiamque to Guacay is a distance of about two hundred and thirty leagues of level land. From Aguacay to Daycao, a distance of one hundred and twenty leagues, is all a mountainous country. From the port of Espiritu Santo to Apalache, they marched from east to west and northeast;³²⁸ from Cutifachiqui to Xuala, from south to north; from

*In talking about soil, the Portuguese *delgado*, which Robertson rendered as "lean," would be better rendered as "thin."

†The Portuguese *ten o arvoredo mais ralo*, which Robertson translated as "has the most open forest," would catch the nuance of the Portuguese better if rendered as "has the forest more open."

many walnuts, plums, mulberries, and grapes. They sow and harvest the maize, each one cultivating his own. The fruits are common to all, for they grow very abundantly in the open fields, without it being necessary to plant or cultivate them. Wherever there are mountains, there are chestnuts. They are somewhat smaller than those of Spain. From the great river westward, the walnuts differ from the others,³³⁰ for they are easier to crush and shaped like acorns.³³¹ From the great river to the port, they are, for the most part, hard and the trees and walnuts seem similar to those of Spain. In all parts of the country is a fruit which comes from a plant like "ligoacam,"³³² which the Indians sow. The fruit resembles the royal pear, and has an excellent smell and a delicious taste. Another plant grows in the open field, which produces a fruit near the ground like the strawberry, which is very tasty. The plums are of two kinds, red and gray, of the form and size of walnuts.³³³ They have three or four stones. They are better than all those of Spain and they make much better dried ones of them. Only in the grapes can one perceive the lack of cultivation, which although they are large have large seeds.* All the other fruits are very perfect and less harmful than those of Spain. In Florida, are many bears and lions, wolves, deer, jackals, cats, and rabbits. There are many wild fowl there, as large as peafowls, small partridges like those of Africa, cranes, ducks, turtledoves, thrushes, and sparrows. There are certain black birds³³⁴ which are larger than sparrows and smaller than starlings. There are goshawks, falcons, sparrowhawks, and all the birds of prey found in Spain. The Indians are well proportioned. Those of the flat lands are of taller stature and better built than those of the mountains. Those of the interior are better supplied with maize and clothing native to the country than those of the coast. The land along the coast³³⁵ is lean and poor; and the more warlike people are along the coast. From the port of Espiritu Santo to Apalache, and from Apalache to the river of Palmas [the land runs] from east to west; from the river of Palmas to New Spain from north to south, with a gentle coast, but with many shoals and high sand hills.

DEO GRATIAS.

*Although lack of cultivation may well be what Elvas had in mind in his use of the expression *falta de adobio*, rendered literally the Portuguese means "lack of fertilizer (or manure)."

THIS RELATION OF THE DISCOVERY OF
FLORIDA WAS PRINTED IN THE
HOUSE OF ANDRÉ DE BURGOS,
PRINTER AND GENTLEMAN
OF THE HOUSE OF THE
LORD CARDINAL
INFANTE.³³⁶

IT WAS FINISHED ON THE TENTH DAY OF
FEBRUARY OF THE YEAR ONE THOUSAND
FIVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SEVEN IN
THE NOBLE AND EVER LOYAL
CITY OF EVORA.